

Old Fig Garden Transportation and Land Use Study, Historic Context

“Garden of Eden”

Presentation May 23, 2012

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City of Fresno



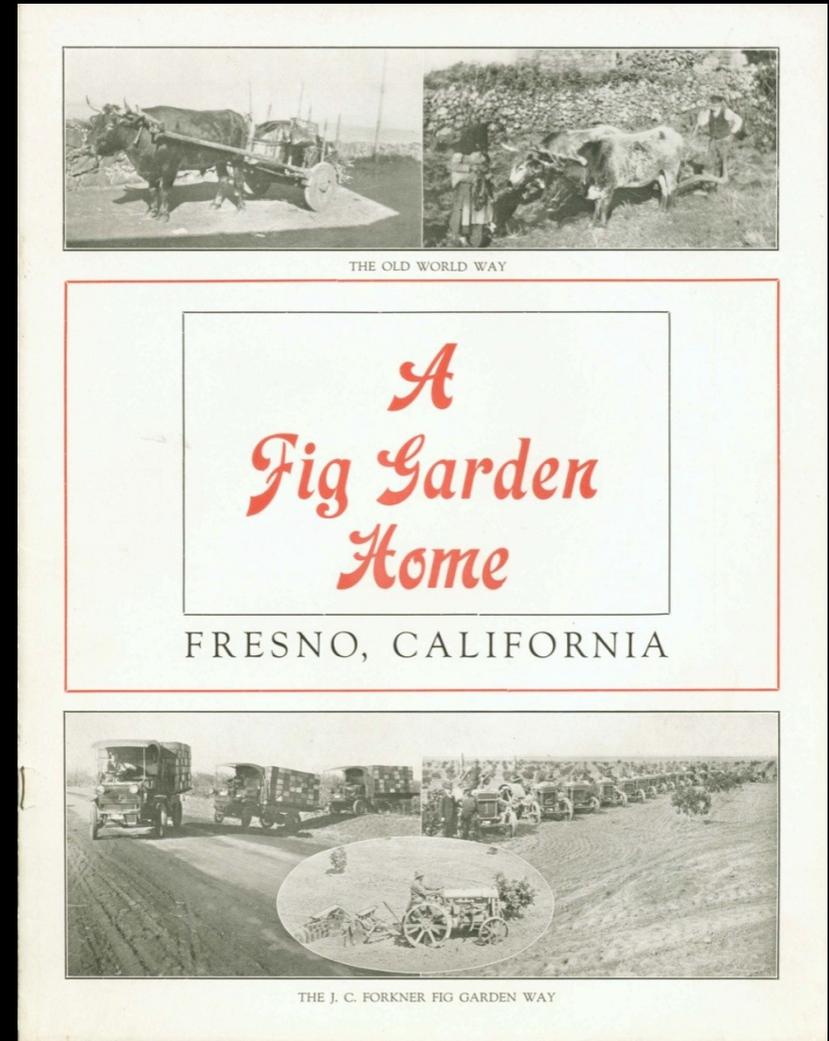
Historic Contexts

- ***Purpose and Need:*** *Historic contexts are critical for land use planning: plan for the future by respecting and understanding the past-*
- ***Contexts include:***
- *Overview of major themes in history of area-*
- *A timeline of important events-*
- *Catalogue of architectural styles and property types-*
- ***Recommendations*** *for future research and action.*



Research Tools

- **Primary and secondary sources such as-**
- **Maps (tract and Sanborn fire insurance maps)-**
- **Newspaper and journal articles; sales ads-**
- **Interviews-**
- **Architectural surveys, building permits and the buildings themselves-**
- **County histories, etc.**
- **Conflicting information.**





Early Panorama Fresno c1882, "Piety Flat"
Photo Courtesy: Fresno Historical Society



Forkner's Vision: The Garden of Eden

- *In 1910 J.C. Forkner came to San Joaquin Valley to look at land-*
- *He obtained a one-year option to purchase 6,000 acres of hog wallow/ "outlaw land" from the Bullard Company-*
- *Made soil tests; Biblical vision that land could produce.*



Photo: Fresno Historical Society



Fig Production

- *1910- Forkner conferred with Berkeley professor Edward J. Wickson about viability of growing figs-*
- *Forkner hired Fresno fig grower Henry Markarian as a consultant-*
- *Forkner leveled land using horse teams pulling Fresno scrapers; later Ford tractors-*
- *Used dynamite to blast through the hard pan.*



Van Ness Boulevard
Photo: Fresno Historical Society



J.C. Forkner Fig Gardens

- *Original 6,000 acres expanded to 12,000 with 600,000 fig trees-*
- *For every 10 fig trees, one ornamental planted in avenues and parks, thus 60,000 ornamental trees and shrubs-*
- *Fig Gardens for all: Modest homes and mansions alike... “Not simply a place to live but a place to live better”*
- *A sustainable community: public transit with street car line; boost to local economy.*



Developed for Fig Production

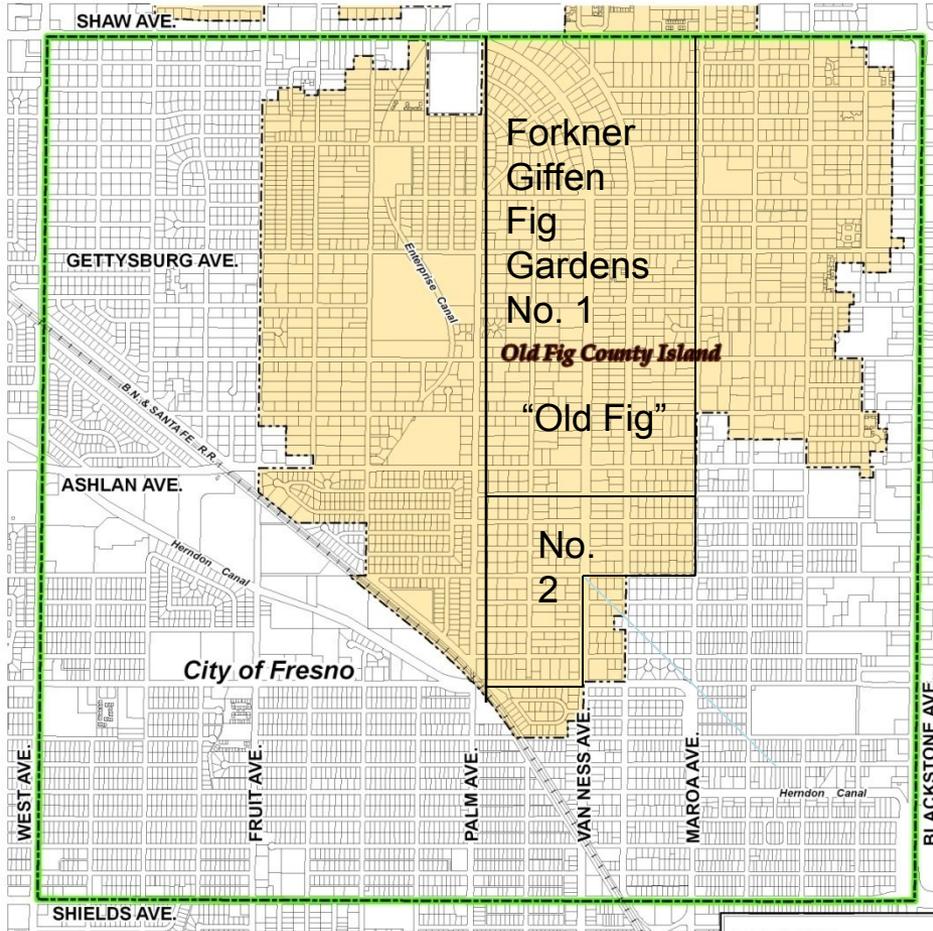


Photo: Fresno Historical Society

- *Circa 1917 around 800 property owners, with holdings from one to 1,000 acres, including some large companies -*
- *Figarden town in middle of project site of processing plants and company offices.*



Old Fig Garden Community Transportation and Land Use Plan Boundaries



LEGEND

- Plan Boundary
- City Limits
- County of Fresno

Grant request submitted by the
County of Fresno, City of Fresno and
the Fig Garden Homeowners Association.

Forkner-
Giffen Fig
Gardens
Subdivisions
1919



Herndon Canal Flood of 1938

Photo:
Fresno
Historical
Society



Architectural Heritage: Fig Garden Adobes



Nevins Adobe (1920-1947);
Claude Simms Evacuation
(1938); Hilliard Giffen Adobe
(1940), Franklin and Kump.



Fig Garden Architectural Styles

- *“Modest homes and mansions alike-”*
- *Craftsman bungalows-*
- *Period Revival styles (Tudors, Colonial Revival, Spanish Eclectic, Montereys...)*
- *Contemporary and Ranch-*
- *Minimal Traditional.*



Canals, Landscapes, Gardens



Van Ness Boulevard (landscape design by Horace Cotton, 1919); Herndon Canal



Residential Interiors



Interiors: Ames Residence;
Dalle de Verre, Corky Normart;
Detail, *Four Seasons*, Piet
Ogata.



